

# NUCLEAR MATERIALS COURIER

## Frequently Asked Questions

### TOPICS COVERED:

1. Hiring Process
2. Training for New Recruits
3. Salary and Pay Scale
4. Travel Schedule
5. 20-Year Retirement
6. Buying Back Military Time
7. Federal Benefits Eligibility

### 1. WHAT CAN I EXPECT AFTER I SUBMIT MY USAJOBS APPLICATION?

The overall hiring timeline will vary based on how many applicants apply. Once you apply to the position on the USA Jobs website, you can generally expect to an application status update in 2 to 4 weeks. You will need to check your USAJobs profile for updates to your status.

After initial selections have been made, we will bring the selected applicants to Albuquerque for a 3-day medical and psychological screening. The Agency will cover the cost of your flights, hotel and meals for the 3-day screening. Your visit to Albuquerque for a screening will not occur until 2 to 4 months after you submit your application on the USA Jobs website. Applicants will need to pass the 3-day screening before beginning the Q-Clearance investigation and being slated for an upcoming training class.

### 2. WHAT TRAINING IS REQUIRED FOR NUCLEAR MATERIALS COURIERS?

Nuclear Materials Courier Basic (NMCB) will take approximately 18 weeks to complete. NMCB is composed of several areas of coursework that you must successfully complete before graduating. The primary coursework will focus on Drive, Firearms and Tactics. All of NMCB will be conducted at Ft Chaffee, located just outside Fort Smith, AR.

During the first week of training you will be required to complete a 1 mile run in 8 minutes and 30 seconds or less and a 40 yard sprint from the prone in 8 seconds or less. Failure to pass within these allotted timeframes will result in termination and you will be sent home.

Trainees will be required to qualify on assigned weapons (day and night), pass written tests and complete the requirements for a Commercial Driver's License. Failure to meet any qualifications during the training will result in removal from employment.

Travel expenses will be covered to and from the training. In addition, Nuclear Materiel Courier trainees will be full time federal employees on the first day of training and will receive full salary and benefits throughout the training. Relocation expenses after graduation will not be covered.

### 3. WHAT IS THE STARTING SALARY OF A NUCLEAR MATERIALS COURIER?

The National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) operates under a Pay Banding and Pay for Performance Demonstration Project in which positions are classified by career path, occupational series, and pay bands (rather than the traditional General Schedule [GS] grades in the Federal Service).

Pay increases within pay bands are based on annual performance evaluations rather than traditional Federal Service step increases based on longevity. The exact salary offered for this position will be confirmed in a Final Offer Letter after all requirements have been met.

*Basic Agent: NV-01 (GS 08 – GS 10 range)*

- *Starting pay is currently just over \$50K (overtime is in addition to base salary)  
There is a considerable amount of overtime once on regular mission rotations.  
(300-600 hours per year, but never guaranteed)*

*Senior Agent – Vehicle Commander NV-02 (GS-11 range)*

*Lead Agent – Convoy Commander NV-03 (GS-12 range)*

*Squad Commander NV-04 (GS-13 range)*

### 4. HOW MUCH TIME WOULD I BE AWAY ON TRAVEL?

The Nuclear Materials Courier travel schedule can be demanding yet is still very reasonable for those who have families. In a typical month, you will be on the road (mission weeks) every other week. The weeks you are not traveling (training weeks) you will train with your Unit and have time to take care of any administrative items. It will not be uncommon for you to be traveling several weeks consecutively due to back-to-back missions or for travel to out of state training venues.

Applicants will need to live within a reasonable distance from their assigned duty station due to the fact that a 5 day-a-week commute is required on training weeks. Operational Missions will depart from and return to your home duty station.

### 5. IS THE NUCLEAR MATERIALS COURIER POSITION COVERED BY THE FEDERAL 20-YEAR ENHANCED RETIREMENT PLAN?

Yes. If hired as a Nuclear Materiel Courier, you will be placed in the 20-year special enhanced retirement. The minimum retirement age for Nuclear Materials Couriers is age 50 and mandatory retirement is age 57. You can retire at any age and begin drawing a pension after serving a minimum of 25 years in a covered position.

You also may “retire” earlier than age 50 after you complete your 20 years of service, however, you would not begin collecting your retirement pension until you are 50.

This is called Deferred Retirement. If you choose to continue working beyond 20 years until you are age 50, one percent will be added to your pension for each additional year of service beyond your initial 20-years.

## **6. WILL MY ACTIVE DUTY MILITARY SERVICE APPLY TO MY FEDERAL RETIREMENT?**

Yes. Once you are in a federal position, you can buy-back your qualifying active duty military time and apply it to your federal retirement. The amount of time you buy back from the military will not count toward your initial 20-year retirement requirement, but rather the time will be added to your total number of years as a Federal employee.

You will buy your military time back at a small percentage of what your total pay was for each year of earnings during active duty service. For each year of active duty military service that you buy back, 1% will be added to the total percentage rate of your retirement pension.

Once you are a full-time federal employee, you will have 2 years to begin buying back your military time before the amount you owe begins accruing interest.

You can buy back your military time with a lump sum payment, or you can have an allotment taken out of each paycheck until you pay it off.

## **7. WHEN WILL I BE ELIGIBLE FOR FEDERAL BENEFITS?**

You will be eligible for full benefits the day you report for duty. (Medical, dental, vision, life insurance etc.) During your first week on the job you will meet with a benefits counselor who will detail all the benefits available to you along with helping you select the plans that are right for you and your family.

The Thrift Savings Program (TSP) is the Federal Government's version of a 401k. From day one, the Agency will automatically contribute 1% of your base salary to your TSP at no cost to you. The Agency will also match the first 4% of your base pay contributions for a total of 5%.

~BLANK~